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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2598

February 19, 1993

At a news briefing in Washington, D.C., Secretary Mike Espy reviewed the agricultural elements of President Clinton's economic package. He noted that agriculture's spending is only 1/6 of 1 percent of the federal budget, and that agriculture therefore does not have deep pockets to cut. Espy said the majority of farm programs will continue, with some changes in discretionary and entitlement funding. USDA photo by Byron Schumaker.



FARMER HEALTH RESEARCH -- The National Cancer Institute, Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences will track for ten years the health of 100,000 farm families in Iowa and North Carolina. They will study personal lifestyle characteristics such as how much time is spent outdoors, pesticide and chemical use, family health history, eating and smoking habits, and how these items relate to cancer. The study will be the largest such examination of American farm families. **Contact: Michael Alavanja (301) 496-1611.**

FOOD STAMP BENEFITS STUDY -- Providing checks instead of food stamps reduces costs with little evidence of an increase in acute food shortages for the receiving households. The finding comes from demonstration projects in San Diego, CA, and 12 counties in Alabama. The studies showed some reduction in food expenditures for households receiving the checks. Money not spent on food was spent on transportation, shelter or medical expenses. Most households that received the checks preferred them to food stamp coupons. A second report, due later this year, will look at the effect on food program participation and on food retailers of providing checks to recipients. **Contact: Phil Shanholtzer (703) 305-2286.**

AGRIBUSINESS MISSION TO HUNGARY -- USDA is looking for representatives of United States agribusiness firms to participate in a May 3-7 mission to Hungary. USDA's Office of International Cooperation and Development acting administrator John Miranda says the goals are to identify joint ventures between the U.S. and Hungarian entrepreneurs that result in U.S. investment in Hungarian agribusiness, and increase opportunities for trade between the U.S. and Hungary. Through business linkages with Hungarian companies, American firms can be in a better position to gain access to the EC and compete for Eastern European and former Soviet markets. **Contact: Maria Nemeth-Ek (202) 690-1983.**

HURRY-UP GENE -- Traditional plant breeding to obtain resistance against virus diseases requires growing the plants for years, and the effort can require decades. USDA scientists have used an antisense gene to produce resistance to bean yellow mosaic virus. It could protect crops such as beans, peas, forage legumes, and ornamental flowers from virus enemies. Antisense technology is a form of genetic engineering where cells are instructed to do the opposite of what one of their genes is telling them to do. The genetic material binds to an invading virus and prevents the virus from reproducing and harming the plant. The antisense gene may be ready for use in two years. **Contact: Hank Becker (301) 504-8547.**

SOYBEAN CRUSH -- The third consecutive season of record soybean crush is projected in 1992/93, at 1.2 billion bushels. Soybean exports are projected at 745 million bushels, the third consecutive season of increased exports and the highest since 1987/88. Soybean prices are projected to decline this season. The average price received by farmers is expected to range between \$5.30 to \$5.50 per bushel, compared to last season's \$5.60 per bushel average. **Contact: Scott Sanford (202) 219-0840.**

I'LL HAVE A LARGE ORANGE -- Orange production is forecast at 11.3 million tons, 27 percent more than last season's crop. The primary reason for the rise is a significant increase in the size of the Florida orange crop. Grapefruit production is predicted at 2.5 million tons, 26 percent more than last season, primarily due to a much larger grapefruit crop in Florida. **Contact: Jim Brewster (202) 720-7688.**

DAIRY PRODUCTION OUTLOOK -- Lower milk prices will likely accelerate dairy farm exits through the winter farm auction season. Farm exits are not expected to reach the rates of 1991 and 1992. Milk prices should not drop to the low levels of 1991. Expansion of some farms is expected to offset the loss of cows from exiting farms. Expected milk-feed price ratios are unlikely to encourage large increases in concentrate feeding. Without such boosts gains in milk per cow will moderate during the first half of this year. Even so, milk per cow is projected to rise about 2 percent in the first half of 1993. **Contact: Sara Short (202) 219-0770.**

FARMER'S SHARE OF FOOD PRICES -- The farm-value of food purchased in grocery stores, the proportion of a retail price that farmers receive, decreased from 30 percent in 1990 to 27 percent in 1991, the most recent year for the statistics. Lower farm prices and the downturn in the economy resulted in retail food prices increasing 2.9 percent, the smallest amount since 1985. **Contact: Ralph Parlett (202) 219-0870.**

AG INPUTS -- Fertilizer use in 1992/93 is expected to decrease 4 percent from a year earlier, with fertilizer prices flat. Pesticide use on the 10 major crops is projected at 472 million pounds of active ingredients in 1993, down 3 percent from 1992. Herbicide use is expected to decrease about 14 million pounds, primarily because of reduced corn acreage. Insecticide and fungicide use is expected to remain stable. Energy prices this year are expected to be above 1992 prices. **Contact: Stan Daberkow (202) 219-0456.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1863 -- This is the time of year when we like to dream about our gardens while flipping through pages of seed catalogs. On this edition **Brenda Curtis** talks with home and garden specialist **Denise Sharp** about this year's gardening plans. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME # 1345 -- Gardening by the fire; pruning tips; summer food program; weed barriers for new trees; new sweeteners on the way. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1855 -- USDA News Highlights; USDA budget review; farm input update; U.S. sheep and lamb inventory; corn resists armyworm. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1608 -- Rust rangers; research on the road; catfish medicine; fish diseases; catfish, a low-fat protein source. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Thursday, Feb. 25, ag export outlook, world tobacco situation; Friday, Feb. 26, feed yearbook, ag prices; Monday, March 1, horticultural exports; Tuesday, March 2, weekly weather and crop update. These are the **USDA reports we know about in advance**. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on soy oil diesel fuel; **Pat O'Leary** looks at naturally fertile fields; and **Will Pemble** reports on training beneficial bees.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA chief meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on weather and crops; **Billy Johnson**, deputy administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, on the avian flu virus; and USDA economist **Leland Southard** on livestock and poultry.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on conserving water at home; **Lynn Wyvill** on the national parasitic collection; and **DeBoria Janifer** on community food banks.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update** with anchors **Eric Parsons** and **Lori Spiczka**. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

FINAL PLANS...are being made for the March 9 annual Ag Outlook Meeting, says **Todd Gleason** (WILL, Urbana IL). Todd's station is hosting the event at the Beef House in Covington, IN. Major topics include market analysis, weather, and agriculture and the environment.

THOUGHTS OF SPRING...are in the air, says **Lou Hansen** (RFD Radio Network, Bloomington, IL), even while producers in the northern area of the state continue harvesting. The region has dried out, allowing machinery to move into the fields again. Lou says spring can't get here too quickly.

27 RADIO STATIONS...are involved in the selection of Wisconsin Farm Wife of the Year, says **Jerry Urdahl** (WWIB, Chippewa Falls, WI). Jerry's station serves as flagship for the effort. Selection will be held in April at the banquet of the Colby, Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce.

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ARKANSAS FARM SHOW...in Little Rock was covered by **Gordon Barnes** (KSSN, Little Rock, AR). Attendance was larger than last year, and the number of exhibitors was up 25%. Gordon says a coalition of producers, **Farmers Are Environmentalists Too**, introduced a bill in the state legislature and got it passed. It establishes workable regulations for improved disposal and use of animal wastes.

GOVERNOR'S AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE... March 4, in Carney, NE, will be covered live, says **Rich Hawkins** (KRVN, Lexington, NE). Rich took the opportunity to stop by USDA during his coverage of the Feed Grains Council meeting in Washington, D.C. in early February.

THE PHILOSOPHER...who said that wise men talk because they have something to say, and fools because they have to say something, never had to fill until sign off.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division